

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 03487 061213Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03
PA-01 CA-01 VO-05 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00
/067 W

-----035433 070010Z /62

R 052115Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5618
INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BUENOS AIRES 3487

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, SREF, AR
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INTERCESSION ON BEHALF OF HECTOR CAMPORA

1. EX-PRESIDENT HECTOR CAMPORA TOGETHER WITH HIS SON HAS BEEN IN ASYLUM IN THE MEXICAN EMBASSY SINCE APRIL 15, 1976. THE GOA HAS REFUSED TO GRANT A SAFE CONDUCT TO PERMIT THEM TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. CAMPORA IS ONE OF THE 36 PROMINENT PERONIST POLITICIANS WHO ARE INCLUDED IN THE JUNTA INSTITUTIONAL ACT WHICH STRIPPED THEM OF THEIR POLITICAL RIGHTS, THEIR ASSETS, AND PROVIDED FOR INDEFINITE DETENTION AT THE CONVENIENCE OF THE EXECUTIVE.

2. ON APRIL 27 CAMPORA'S NEPHEW MARIO ALBERTO CAMPORA CALLED AT THE EMBASSY TO MAKE INQUIRIES IF THE USG WOULD INTERCEDE IN BEHALF OF HIS UNCLE WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF OBTAINING SAFE CONDUCT FOR HIM. MARIO DID NOT MENTION SAFE CONDUCT FOR THE DAMPORA'S SON OR ABEL MEDINA, ALSO ASYLEES IN THE MEXICAN EMBASSY. MARIO CAMPORA HAD A CAREER IN THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN SERVICE OF 22 YEARS AND WAS POLITICAL COUNSELOR IN WASHINGTON PRIOR TO RESIGNING IN 1973 TO BECOME
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PAGE 02 BUENOS 03487 061213Z

FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISOR FOR HIS UNCLE. HE STRESSED THAT THERE WERE NO CIVIL OR CRIMINAL CHARGES OUTSTANDING AGAINST HECTOR; THAT THE GOA IS, IN EFFECT, USING THE MEXICAN EMBASSY AS A PRISON TO PUNISH HECTOR; THAT HECTOR IS IN NO WAY A COMMUNIST OR ASSOCIATED WITH COMMUNISTS DESPITE OCCASIONAL CHARGES TO THE CONTRARY, AND THAT HIS CASE MERITS USG SUPPORT ON HUMANITARIAN

GROUNDS. MARIO MENTIONED THAT HECTOR'S WIFE HAD MADE AN APPEAL DIRECTLY TO THE POPE THROUGH AN ARGENTINE CARDINAL IN ROME IN 1977. IT APPEARS THAT THE POPE DECLINED TO INTERCEDE ON HECTOR'S BEHALF. MARIO SAID THAT HE REALIZES THAT A DECISION ON A USG INTERCESSION WOULD REQUIRE SOME DELIBERATION AND IF IT WERE FAVORABLE MRS. CAMPORA WOULD COME TO THE EMBASSY TO MAKE A FORMAL REQUEST THAT THE USG MANIFEST ITS INTEREST IN DR. CAMPORA'S CASE.

3. EMBOFF STATED THAT USG HAD MANIFESTED ITS INTEREST IN RESOLUTION OF HUMANITARIAN CASES, MOST SPECIFICALLY IN INSTANCES OF SOVIET DISSIDENTS, AND THAT DR. CAMPORA'S VIRTUAL INCARCERATION FOR TWO YEARS WITHOUT CHARGES CERTAINLY RAISED HUMANITARIAN ISSUES WORTH OF CONSIDERATION. AT THE SAME TIME INTERCESSION ON BEHALF OF CAMPORA FOR EXECUTION OF TREATY OBLIGATIONS RELATING TO THE RIGHT OF ASYLUM WOULD PUT THE US IN A POSITION OF REQUESTING A RIGHT FOR CAMPORA WHICH THE USG DOES NOT RECOGNIZE. MARIO CAMPORA AGREED THAT THIS LEGALITY WOULD NOT REINFORCE USG STANDING IN THE MATTER. EMBOFF STATED THAT THE PETITION WOULD BE CONSIDERED AND MARIO CAMPORA WOULD BE INFORMED IF THE USG WERE TO FIND IT POSSIBLE TO INTERCEDE IF BEHALF OF HECTOR CAMPORA.
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PAGE 03 BUENOS 03487 061213Z

3. EMBASSY RECOMMENDATION: IT WOULD APPEAR THAT GOA IS IN VIOLATION OF ITS INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS BY FAILING TO GRANT SAFE CONDUCT TO CAMPORA. AS MARIO CAMPORA STATED, THIS IS BASICALLY AN ISSUE BETWEEN GOA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO. EMBASSY AGREES THAT THERE ARE HUMANITARIAN ISSUES INVOLVED IN CAMPORA'S CONTINUED RESTRICTION TO MEXICAN EMBASSY, BUT FEEL THESE PALE BESIDE THE MAJOR HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES WHICH STAND BETWEEN GOA AND IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH USG. SINCE CAMPORA IS A MAJOR SYMBOL OF THE CORRUPTION AND TOADYING TO TERRORIST ELEMENTS WHICH GENERATED WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR MILITARY TAKEOVER IN MARCH 1976, US INTERCESSION ON HIS BEHALF WOULD HAVE A HOLLOW RING IN THE EARS OF MOST ARGENTINES, AND WOULD CONFIRM TO SOME THAT WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN THE WELFARE OF THOSE WHO HAVE WORKED TO UNDERMINE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. THIS EMBASSY CANNOT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE RECOMMEND INTERCESSION ON BEHALF OF EX-PRESIDENT CAMPORA, AND BELIEVES THAT WE MUST CONCENTRATE OUR ENERGIES ON THOSE INSTITUTIONAL AND PRACTICAL REFORMS, SUCH

AS REGULARIZED ARREST PROCEDURES, WHICH WILL HAVE THE GREATEST POSITIVE IMPACT FOR THE RIGHTS OF ALL ARGENTINES. US INTERCESSION IN THE CASE OF JACOBO TIMERMAN--AS ONE EXAMPLE--HAD SYMBOLIC CONNOTATIONS BECAUSE OF TIMERMAN'S ASSOCIATION WITH FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND AGAINST AUTHORITARIANISM. THIS ARGUMENT DOES NOT APPLY IN THE CASE OF HECTOR CAMPORA, HOWEVER DESERVING HIS INDIVIDUAL CASE MAY BE. THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THE DEPARTMENT DECLINE TO INTERCEDE IN HIS BEHALF.

4. THE DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS ARE REQUESTED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL ASYLUM, EMBASSIES, POLITICAL LEADERS, TRAVEL CONTROLS, POLICIES, DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS, TEXT ON MICROFILM ONLY
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BUENOS03487
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: ACCESSION #D780194-0291 REMOVED FROM SYSTEM, TEXT UPGRADED PER MEMO P910163-0688
Executive Order: OA
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P910163-0705, D780194-0291
Format: TEL
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780590/aaaacywv.tel
Line Count: 128
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: edddcba3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: LOU
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LOU
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2785020
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REQUEST FOR INTERCESSION ON BEHALF OF HECTOR CAMPORA
TAGS: SREF, PINS, AR, MX, US, (CAMPORA, HECTOR)
To: STATE MEXICO
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/edddcba3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014